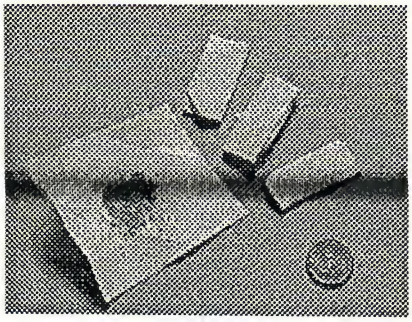
The Taliban's Secret Heroin Weapon

By Sam Vaknin



I. THE POPPY FIELDS

Conspiracy theorists in the Balkan have long speculated on the true nature of the Albanian uprising in Macedonia. According to them, Afghanistan was about to flood Europe with cheap opium through the traditional Balkan routes. The KLA - denounced by the State Department as late as 1998 as a drug trafficking organization - was, in the current insurrection, in its new guise as the NLA, simply establishing a lawless beachhead in Macedonia, went the rumours.

The Taliban were known to stock c. 3000 tonnes of raw opium. The Afghanis - Arab fighters against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan - another 2000 tonnes (their fee for providing military and security services to the Taliban). Even at the current, depressed, prices, this would fetch well over 2 billion US dollars in next door Pakistan. It also represents 5 years of total European consumption and a (current) street level value in excess of 100 billion US dollars.

The Taliban intends to offload this quantity in the next few months and to convert it to weapons. Destablizing the societies of the West is another welcome side effect.

It is ironic that the Taliban collaboration with the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP) culminated this year in the virtual eradication of all opium poppies in Afghanistan. Only 18 months ago, Afghan opium production (c. 4600 tonnes a year) accounted for 70% of world consumption (in the form of heroin). The shift (partly forced on the Taliban by an unusual climate) from poppies to cereals (that started in 1997) was thus completed successfully.

II. AGRICULTURE

Afghanistan is not a monolithic entity. It is a mountainous and desert territory (c. 251,000 sq. miles in size, less than 10% of it cultivated). Administratively and politically, it is reminiscent of Somalia. The Taliban government - now recognized only by Pakistan - rules the majority of the country as a series of tribal fiefdoms. The country - ruined by a decade of warfare between majority Pushtuns and minority Tajiks and Uzbeks in the north - lacks all institutions, or infrastructure. In an economy of subsistence agriculture and trading, millions (up to one third of a population of 27 million) have been internally displaced or rendered refugees. One third of all farms have been vacated. Close to 70% of all villages are demolished. Unemployment - in a mostly unskilled workforce of 11 million - may well exceed 50%. Poverty is rampant, food scarce, population growth unsustainable. The traditional social safety net - the family - has unraveled, leading to widespread and recurrent famine and malnutrition. The mainstays of grazing and cattle herding have been hampered by mines and deforestation.

The Taliban regime has been good to the economy. It restored the semblance of law and order. Agricultural production recovered to pre-Soviet invasion (1978) levels. Friendly Pakistan provided 80% of the shortfall in grain (international aid agencies provided the rest). The number of heads of livestock - the only form of savings in

devastated Afghanistan - increased. Many refugees came back.

Urban workers - mostly rural labourers displaced by war - fared worse, though. As industries and services vanished and army recruitment stabilized with the Taliban's victories, salaries decreased by up to 40% while inflation picked up (to an annual average of 20-25%, as reflected in the devaluation of the currency and in the price of bread). More than 50% of the average $1 a day wage of the casual, unskilled, worker, are spent on bread alone!

But this discrepancy between a recovering agricultural sector and the dilapidated and depleted cities led to reverse migration back to the villages. In the long term it was a healthy trend.

Paradoxically, the collapse of the central state led to the emergence of a thriving and vibrant private sector engaged in both legal and criminal activities. Foreign exchange dealing is conducted in thousands of small, privately owned, exchange offices. Rich Afghani traders have invested heavily in small scale and home industries (mainly in textiles and agri-business).

III. TRADE

In some respects, Afghanistan is an extension of Pakistan economically and, until recently, ideologically. Food prices in Afghanistan, for instance - the only reliable indicator of inflation - closely follow Pakistan's. The Afghan currency (there are two - one issued by the Taliban and another issued by the deposed government in Faizabad) is closely linked to Pakistan's currency, though unofficially so. The regions closest to Pakistan (Herat, Jalalabad, Kandahar) - where cross border trading, drug trafficking, weapons smuggling, illegal immigration (to Western Europe), and white slavery are brisk - are far more prosperous than the northern, war-torn, ones (Badakhshan, Bamyan). The Taliban uses economic sanctions in its on-going war against the Northern Alliance. In 1998-9, it has blockaded the populous provinces of Parwan and Kapisa.

Another increasingly important trade partner is Turkmenistan. It supplies Afghanistan with petrol, diesel, LNG, and jet fuel (thus reducing Afghani dependence on hostile Iranian supplies). Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, its two other neighbours, are considered by the Taliban to be enemies. This enmity results in much higher costs of transportation which price out many Afghan products.

With Pakistan, Afghanistan has an agreement (the Afghan Transit Trade) which provides the latter with access to the sea. Afghanistan imports consumer goods and durables through this duty free corridor (and promptly re-exports them illegally to Pakistan). Pakistani authorities periodically react by unilaterally dropping duty free items off the ATT list. The Afghans proceed to import the banned items (many of them manufactured in Pakistan's archrival, India) via the Gulf states, Russia, Ukraine (another important drug route) and into Pakistan.

IV. THE FUTURE

The current conflict can be a blessing in disguise. Western aid and investment can help resuscitate the Soviet era mining (Copper, Zinc) operations and finally tap Afghanistan's vast reserves of oil and natural gas. With a GDP per capita of less than $800, there is room for massive growth. Yet, such bright prospects are dimmed by inter-ethnic rivalry, a moribund social system, decades of war and natural disaster (such as the draught in 1998-9), and intense meddling and manipulation by near and far.

One thing is certain: opium production is likely to increase dramatically. And Western users will be treated to ever cheaper heroin and Hashish.

Sam Vaknin is the author of "Malignant Self Love - Narcissism Revisited"and "After the Rain - How the West Lost the East". He is a
columnist in "Central Europe Review", United Press International (UPI) and ebookweb.org and the editor of mental

health and
Central East Europe categories in The Open Directory, Suite101 and searcheurope.com. Until recently, he served as the Economic
Advisor to the Government of Macedonia. His web site: http://samvak.tripod.com.

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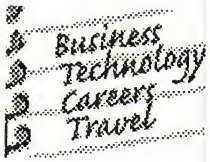

Central Asia/Russia

COMMENT

This report cannot be independently verified

By Pepe Escobar

ISLAMABAD - "This information cannot be independently verified." This is the new mantra on 24-hour news TV as the Slaughter Show of the world's most miserable by the world's most affluent reaches its third week - with very good ratings indeed.

Shame on CNN and BBC. Shame on Donald "Duck!" Rumsfeld. Fact: Afghan civilians are dying by the hundreds, victims of American bombing. But for Christiane "The Vulture" Amanpour, Father John Simpson, those sparkling, bubbly, fizzy CNN talking heads, and those dour, somber, frozen-cucumber BBC talking heads, "this information cannot be independently verified".

CNN and BBC are now indistinguishable from "Duck!" Rumsfeld. They behave like fundamentalists: with arrogance - in their sense of unquestionable superiority; with certainty - in their iron belief in a set of absolutely universal values; with prejudice - why would they waste their time trying to understand what is profoundly different from themselves? As BBC's Tim "Mr Righteous" Sebastian put it in referring to Pakistan, why should the West cut "shabby little deals with shabby little nations"?

The Rasool family was having breakfast in Kabul when a bomb supposed to hit a military base a mile away struck their house, killing nine members of the extended family and injuring 12. Refugees crossing the Chaman border every day tell of dozens of civilian victims in Kandahar. "Duck!" Rumsfeld would say they are nothing but liars.

Afghan civilians, for CNN and BBC, obviously do not qualify as independent. They are the only eyewitnesses of the carnage inside Afghanistan. But "independently verified" means verified by CNN or the BBC - in their arrogant, barely contained rage at not being there, inside Afghanistan. Every serious journalist now working in Pakistan is obviously on the verge of a nervous breakdown brought on by the impossibility of being in the theater of war. But it is hard enough trying to convince the Taliban that it is in their own interest to open the borders for the global print media - without having to cope with the "You're lying" shrieks of CNN and BBC.

Al Jazeera - the Qatar-based TV station - happens to be inside

Afghanistan and as close to the theater of war as possible - but that is too much for the Anglo-American media giants, and Way Too Much for America itself, which does not think twice about censoring "sensitive" Al Jazeera broadcasts. Mohamad Bourini is a reporter covering the war for Al Jazeera from Peshawar. He worked for three years in Afghanistan. He said he was "never censored" by his bosses in Doha, Qatar.

The smart, high-IQ bombs of the Pentagon may not find Osama bin Laden and the evildoers of Al-Qaeda, but they are finding houses a mile away from their targets, UN mine-clearing staff, shepherds and their families, a whole village, a Red Cross compound, a school, a bus, the bazaars of Kandahar, a hospital in Herat. It is a sterling record - but of course this cannot be independently verified. One of these days the Pentagon may even "inadvertently" drop a bomb on Al Jazeera's office in Kabul - and remain mute about it. Or accuse any accusing voice of lying.

As this is an invisible war, and perception is reality, the fact is that the Pentagon can say or not say anything it wants: its barrage of disinformation cannot be independently verified.

So the major public relations lesson is this: if you are rich and poweful and Western, you can bomb whatever you like, the way you like, for as long as you like. And you disclose information - if any - about it the way you like. If you are poor and miserable and Islamic, you shut up and get bombed. Don't make any attempt to say anything about it, because your information cannot be independently verified.

The Greatest Armada in the History of the Universe took four days to secure "aerial supremacy" over a pair of ailing MiGs. Maulvi Jalaluddin Haqqani, the Taliban supreme military commander, said that not a single leader or commander was killed in two weeks of American ballistic fury. He said the Taliban planes were "safe", and Osama bin Laden was "safe, sound and in good spirits". The Taliban says it downed an American helicopter: but the spare parts shown by the Taliban, says the Pentagon, were made by Bin Laden Enterprises.

So T S Eliot was wrong. This is the way the world ends: not with a bang - but with zillions of whimpers which cannot be independently verified.

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World Headlines

Friday October 26 9:58 AM ET

U.S. Jets Hit Kabul on Muslim Holy Day

By KATHY GANNON, Associated Press Writer

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) - U.S. jets struck Kabul on Friday, the Muslim holy day, rocking the city with huge explosions and blasting a Red Cross compound for a second time this month. The Taliban said they captured and executed a noted opposition figure.

During late night bombing Thursday, three children were killed - two from one family living in the northwest area of the city and a third from the east part of town, officials at the Wazir Akbar Khan Hospital said. The United States has repeatedly said it is not targeting civilians and regrets any loss of life.

The Taliban's Bakhtar news agency reported Friday that Abdul Haq, a guerrilla leader in the war against the Soviets, was captured after slipping into Afghanistan and executed by the Taliban for treason. The Taliban accused the opposition figure of spying for the United States and Britain, the agency said.

Haq had gone to Afghanistan with peace proposals on behalf of former king Mohammad Zaher Shah, an aide to the former monarch said in Rome. The United States and other Western countries have urged the former king to play a major role in forming a government to replace the Taliban.

Bakhtar said Haq, who has one foot, was captured early Friday after villagers in Logar province, some 30 miles east of Kabul, tipped off Taliban intelligence to his whereabouts.

There was a firefight between Haq's party and the Taliban, leaving four Taliban soldiers and three civilians injured, the agency said.

Bakhtar said Haq was ``killed by the Taliban" under a religious decree that stipulates death for anyone spying for Britain and the United States. It wasn't clear how Haq was executed.

According to Bakhtar, Haq was found with two satellite telephones, U.S. dollars and documents. The news agency didn't say what the documents were.

``At the same time Abdul Haq was captured one jet and two helicopters came to try to help him but they failed," the agency said.

In Peshawar, Pakistan, Haq's nephew, Mohammed Yousuf, said ``Bakhtar news agency is lying. Know that he is alive."

Asked how he knew that, he replied: ``We don't have any source but we know that he's alive." He refused to give details.

The nephew said Haq went to Afghanistan six days ago along with six or seven people, most of them his relatives.

In Rome, Hamid Sidiq, a spokesman for the former king, said: ``Commander Haq was on a mission for peace, not for war. He was not going to fight anyone but to talk to tribal elders to inform them about the peace initiative of his majesty, the king."

If the report about Haq's death is confirmed, he would be the second key opposition figure killed in two months. Northern alliance leader Ahmed Shah Massood was assassinated in a Sept. 9 suicide bombing.

Despite days of U.S. bombing aimed at crucial supply lines north of the capital city of Kabul, Taliban forces appeared to hold their ground. Opposition commanders complained the attacks were too weak to break the Taliban lines.

After another night of sometimes intense bombing, three huge detonations shook Kabul at midday, raising clouds of smoke from the direction of the airport and the Khair Khana district to the north. It was unclear where the third explosion occurred.

One of the blasts struck a compound of the International Committee of the Red Cross, according to security guard Abdul Shakour. He said warehouses used to store humanitarian supplies were damaged and stocks of rice, beans, blankets and oil were on fire. The compound was hit during an attack Oct. 16.

Following the attack, bright orange flames roared through the ICRC warehouse as the ICRC's Afghan staff stood and watched helplessly.

``This is the second time our warehouses have been hit," ICRC worker Abdul Rashid said as he watched the flames. ``Of course I am sad. We had special programs over the next several days to distribute these items to the disabled people."

During a sermon at a Kabul mosque Friday, the Muslim sabbath, an Islamic cleric said the ``infidel hit our nation, even on Friday. They are very unkind to our people." He urged the faithful to be patient because ``we will win."

President Bush launched the airstrikes Oct. 7 after the Taliban refused to hand over Osama bin Laden, chief suspect in the September terrorist attacks in the United States.

In other attacks-related developments:

- Britain announced Friday it will commit 200 special forces troops to the offensive in Afghanistan as part of a larger military force to include warships and planes. They are to be stationed on assault ships in the region, and another 400 are to be on standby, Armed Forces Minister Adam Ingram told Parliament.

-Marine Corps commandant Gen. James Jones said the Marines' top special operations unit is ready to deploy to Afghanistan on six hours' notice. He spoke aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt in the Arabian Sea.

-Secretary of State Colin Powell was leading a worldwide public relations campaign designed to convince hundreds of thousands of skeptical Muslims that the U.S. campaign to eliminate the al-Qaida terrorism network is not a conflict with Islam.

-Attorney General John Ashcroft warned terrorists that authorities will use every law and immigration violation to put them behind bars and to intercept their communications, even their unopened electronic and voice mail.

their jet trails, could be seen heading toward the north.

Despite five days of U.S. bombardment, the Taliban appeared to have remained in their positions that threaten the opposition-held Bagram airport. That prevents the opposition from using the airfield as a supply hub for bolstering their forces in case they try to move on Kabul.

In Moscow, the alliance envoy to Russia, Abdul Wahad Assefi, told reporters Russian military supplies have begun flowing to the opposition, but he refused to give further details.

A Russian Defense Ministry official said earlier this month that the fresh equipment will include 40 T-55 tanks, 80 BMP-1 and BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicles, several dozen armored personnel carriers, up to 10 Grad multiple rocket launchers, and anti-aircraft rockets and light arms. The official said the weapons would be delivered by the end of October, the Interfax-Military News Agency said.

During an interview with The Associated Press in opposition-controlled Dashtak, the anti-Taliban movement's main spokesman complained that American front line attacks - usually carried out by only one or two planes - were too weak to dislodge the Taliban.

``There was a lot of room for better conduct of this operation," Abdullah, who like many Afghans uses only one name, said. ``For example, the intensities of the strikes on the Taliban front lines could have been much more concentrated. There could have been much better impact."

Nevertheless, there was no exchange of fire Friday morning between Taliban and northern alliance fighters on the front line in Kapisa province that has been repeatedly hit.

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Jets Strike Kabul on Day of Prayer (October 26)
Taliban Hold Ground During Raids (October 26)
U.S. Planes Dive-Bomb Taliban Posts (October 26)

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Forum in English

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12:50 2001-10-25

JAMES GLASER: GETTING READY FOR WINTER

It is late fall in northern Minnesota. All the leaves are gone, the ducks are coming down from Canada, and we have had that first hard frost. Every year it is like a ritual – you put away all the yard tools, move anything that the snow plow might hit, and check out the furnace. You also have to make sure you have plenty of fire wood in case you need a backup heat.

For veterans, it is not a time we are fond of: "firearm deer season." Thousands and thousands of city dwellers will invade the northland looking for that trophy whitail buck. The thought of thousands of men with no real experience with firearms keeps a lot of veterans inside for the season, and for many the report of a distant rifle can bring back combat in a second.

This year I think of the veterans in Afghanistan. I'm sure at one time they too had their fall ritual, but now with years of war, first with Russia, then ten years of civil war, and now with we Americans attacking, everything must be set aside again in defense of their homeland. There is no doubt in my mind that these guys must have post-traumatic stress big time. Probably the whole country has it.

I am sad, as I look out on the lake and think that like a broken record, that we are once again attacking a country and the veterans of that country are defending their families and homeland. The hate we are building up in those people overwhelms me. I think of how I feel every time I see a Vietnamese. Even after thirty years that hate is still there. Oh, I can stop it, but for those first few seconds of recognition, everything is brought to the forefront and I really have to calm down. I think about the fact that I was the aggressor in their country, and how much hate I still carry. I have to wonder what a Vietnamese vet thinks about me.

Here we are lead into a war by a leader who has never been to war, and that scares me, too. Men who have been to war know that there is nothing good or just about war. Those who have never been, can think of all sorts of "noble" things about their war.

Sending someone to combat is a life sentence. That is why old vets can describe their combat like yesterday, because they have had to relive it in their minds hundreds of times. The people who live in a war zone have that same monkey on their back. Only now it isn't just the war vet, but every man, women, and child. If you make children hate you by killing their parents, sibling, or best friend down the street, you have a lifetime of hate to deal with.

It bothers me also that we are the most powerful country on earth, and we are taking on maybe the most pitiful country. It cheapens what we are doing, and makes the defense of Afghanistan seem kind of noble. This backward country is taking us on, Wow! Crud as it seems, this vet can say that those people have "Balls."

Now I love America and our Constitution and Bill of Rights. Our foundation is what is good about America, and if other countries saw us living by these documents, more of them would want to be like us.

But we don't live by our own set of rules. We have become the warriors of the world. We fight in Iraq, Somalia, Kosovo, Yugoslavia, Panama, Granada, and now Afghanistan. We have become the world's aggressor and that doesn't make friends. Countries are not our friends. Countries fear us and do our bidding out of that fear. To tell you the truth. I don't like us being the bully. I have to ask myself why we can't lead by example rather than by bomber.

Every country that we have attacked with all of our "noble" reasons has been subjected to terror. War is terror on a grand scale. Just introducing troops in full military gear is a form of terror. We terrorize other countries because that is what our leaders think is best for us. Oh, they don't see it as terror because they haven't been to war. George senior was, and maybe that is why he stopped us from going to Baghdad. I think you have to go back to Dwight before you can see a real combat vet. Combat doesn't make the man; it

Calendar

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Diplomatic

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Portuguese President To Pay His First Five-day Visit To Russia Lisbon »»»

When our leaders are sworn in, they put their hand on the Bible and swear to defend the Constitution. In that Bible is a commandment of God, "Thou shalt not kill." That seems pretty clear to me. I don't see how you can interpret that in too many ways, but we do, and that is why we are in the fix we are.

James Glaser

LewRockwell.com

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The ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia

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22:01
RUSLAN KHASBULATOV: GREAT AMERICAN TRAGEDY AND WHAT THE WORLD HAS TO DO TO AVOID THE DEATH OF CIVILIZATION. (PART 3)
The answers to all those questions are not simple and I do not claim I can give the precise and irrefragable recommendations. However, I do believe that that general outline of the activity of the world community towards the harmonization of the entire organizational system of the international relations, removing the tense atmosphere between rich North and poor South is evident More details...

20:22
ANDREY LUBENSKY: UKRAINIAN MAIL TAKES SECURITY MEASURES
In connection with the large amount of information received from the United States of America about the anthrax mail incidents, the Ukrainian mail company Ukrpochta created a schedule of actions for extreme situations More details...

20:03
SPECIALISTS EXAMINE 9TH COMPARTMENT OF THE KURSK SUBMARINE
The first group of investigators and experts descended into the ninth compartment of the Kursk submarine today. Six people in total gained entry to the compartment More details...

19:57
BILL WHITE: ISRAELI LOBBY SCRAMBLING FOR NEW APPROACH TO CRISIS (PART 1)
As Their Allies In Defense Face A Purge, America's "Official" Jewish Groups Look For Justice To Promote Agenda More details...

18:46
YURY RAZGULYAEV: CENTRAL ASIA IS PREPARING FOR POSSIBLE TERRORIST ATTACKS
A delegation of specialists from the Ministry for Emergency Situations came back to the republic of Kyrgyzia from Dushanbe – the capital of the republic of Tajikistan. The delegates participated in the session of the emergency ministers of the Central Asian countries More details...

18:42
PERHAPS YOU WONDERING ABOUT OUR NEW FORUM?
Greetings!As you may know, we were having a great deal of problems with the old forum. We decided to use a new version until we are able to work out all the bugs with the old forum. In other words, this new form will be replaced in the near future with the old forum, as it seems that it was liked much more than the new forum. We appreciate the criticism regarding the new forum and hope that you will continue to participate! In addition, we welcome any helpful ideas regarding the forum.

18:10
DMITRY LITVINOVICH: ANOTHER ENEMY FOR THE U.S.A.
After long speculation ,the U.S.A. has finally found enemy number two. This is the Palestinian organization Hizballah. America considers this group to be a terrorist organization of a "global scale." More details...

17:30
INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS FEDERATION AGAINST USA
The President of the International Human Rights Federation has requested the USA to look beyond its own interests and to cease its offensive in Afghanistan. More details...

17:21
RUSSIAN TROOPS CAN BE DEPLOYED IN AFGHANISTAN
The Russian General Headquarters is working on the question to deploy a Russian military contingent on the

Putin To Meet Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi In The Kremlin »»»

Regions of Russia

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Afghan territory, which is controlled by Northern Alliance troops of the republic of Tajikistan More details...

16:30
COLLATERAL DAMAGE
Among the many claims by the Taliban of bombing raids on civilians, the United Nations has confirmed that a hospital in Heart was hit. More details...

16:05
DEAR READERS,
We invite you to take part in the column О том же самом в английской версии ПРАВДЫ.Ру: Letters to the Editor . We are very interested to know your opinion of the articles (or themes) published on PRAVDA.Ru. On our part, we will publish all your comments (and even your feelings provoked by our materials and our correspondents - ranging from strong disapproval to a warm welcome) - just the way they are. We believe that you will see we are against censorship, and we welcome criticism, including criticism levelled at us. At the same time, we would appreciate it if your criticism would be constructive and not insulting. You can send your comments to English version of PRAVDA.Ru or directly to the English editor of PRAVDA.Ru Inna Novikova. Welcome to this column Letters to the Editor

16:00
JACK STRAW: BOMBARDMENTS OF AFGHANISTAN AS AN AID TO ITS PEOPLE
British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said to help Afghan people the US should continue to bomb them. What is behind these words: the foreign secretary's personal position on the events, or the government's official position? More details...

14:40
YURI KHRAMEEV: "THEY WANTED TO GIVE ME UP, LIKE BUDANOV"
Yuri Khrameev, first commander of Northwest Special Police Group (OMON) and leader of a St Petersburg police group in Chechnya, is almost a legendary person. More details...

12:50
JAMES GLASER: GETTING READY FOR WINTER
It is late fall in northern Minnesota. All the leaves are gone, the ducks are coming down from Canada, and we have had that first hard frost. Every year it is like a ritual – you put away all the yard tools, move anything that the snow plow might hit, and check out the furnace. You also have to make sure you have plenty of fire wood in case you need a backup heat. More details...

12:20
ANDREI LUBENSKI: UKRAINIAN DEFENCE MINISTER RESIGNED
On Wednesday, Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma announced, while appearing in TV, that he had accepted Defence Minister Alexander Kuzmuk's resignation. As known, Kuzmuk has sent in his resignation just after Russian Tu-134 airliner crash over Black Sea. More details...

11:50
IRINA MALENKO: BIBLE – BEST SELLING BOOK IN USA, WHILE IN NETHERLANDS – KORAN
There is an expression in Dutch "to fly like hot rolls over shop board", what means "to be in popular demand". More details...

11:30
DMITRY LITVINOVICH: VICTORY FORGED IN HOME FRONT
US economy is turning to military rail. Militarization of American society becomes inevitable before menace of world terrorism. Americans are really enterprising: they can make money even on war. More details...

10:32
NEBOJSHA MALIC: THE MEANINGS OF MADNESS – NATO'S 'ACCOMPLISHMENTS' IN THE BALKANS
In the Balkans, two weeks can pass like a day or like an eternity. As television, the press and even the Internet increasingly focus on Afghanistan, the peninsula drops off the news radar – barring some major calamity its inhabitants would rather avoid. Over time, however, the numerous small and ignored events open a way for such a calamity, making it seem sudden and unpredictable. More details...

20:44
CHECHEN REBELS CHANGE GEOPOLITICAL ORIENTATION
Afghanistan, "suffering from the US yoke," seems to has become the priority area of interest for Chechen rebels. Jordanian Emir Hattab, one of the most influential Chechen warlords has sent a group of Chechen rebels to help fight the "world evil" personified in the USA. More details...

sensational evidence of his former boss's activities. In his words, the No. 1 terrorist is behind the current biological attacks. More details...

18:21

YURI RAZGULYAYEV: KYRGHYZSTAN SEES TERRORISM AS LARGELY BEING FED BY DRUGS

The Republic of Kyrghyzstan has for three years fought international terrorism, Bolot Zhanuzakov, the chairman of Kyrghyzstan's security council is quoted as saying at the international conference on regional security recently held in Bishkek, Kyrghyzstan's capital city. More details...

17:11

TOTAL WAR FEARED BY ISRAEL

The joint Chief of Staff of the Israeli Armed Forces, General Moshe Yaalon, declares that there is a serious risk of war between Israel and Syria. More details...

16:55

THE BULK OF KURSK SUBMARINE SEEN ABOVE WATER

For the first time since its wreck, television viewrs can see the Kursk submarine appearing above the water. In Roslyakovo, the drainage of the submarine is in progress. The entire upper deck is currently positioned above the water, with waves splashing against about a half the height of the sub's hull. More details...

16:50

PEACE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

A historic offer has been made by Sinn Fein, the political wing of the IRA, which could bring lasting peace to this troubled province. More details...

16:30

AGA KHAN AGAINST TALIBAN

More details...

15:54

THE LYNCH LAW RETURNING

The Muslim world's reaction to the bombing of Afghanistan seems to be going to the extreme. Indonesia, one of the world's largest Muslim countries, has seen a lynch law of sorts staged by Islamic radicals on local Christians. More details...

15:20

TAREK MAHMOOD: UZBEKISTAN'S 'BRIDGE OF FRIENDSHIP' STANDS CLOSED TO THE SOUTH

TERMIZ -- Every day Abdullah Jahangirov Izzatullaevich sees anywhere between 80 and 1,000 pilgrims come his way into the ancient mosque of el-Hakim at-Termizi (cq), where he is the caretaker. More details...

15:06

BUST OF PUTIN: GOOD FOR NOTHING

Do you want to buy a cast-iron bust of the second president of Russia? Others did not want too. Cast-iron busts of the Russian president are not much in demand. The manufacture of them has been stopped by an engineering plant in the city of Kusa, Chelyabinsk region. More details...

15:00

CHRIS DELISO: CHRISTIANITY IN PALESTINE, AND AMERICA'S "WAR ON TERROR"

Noted travel writer William Dalrymple argued recently in the *Independent* for the underlying unity of Islam, Judaism and Christianity, referring for the most part to the early history of Islam and the cultural homogeneity between all of the peoples living in the Levant, no matter what their religious orientation. More details...

14:50

OUR READER BRIAN RUDNICK: OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT BUSH

Listening to your speech I felt very reassured that my vote in last year's Presidential election was the right one After all you're doing for the Afghan people when are they going to start thanking US? My niece loves those astronaut-like food rations you're air dropping along with the bombs More details...

2001.10.22
AFGHANISTAN: FIRST CONTACT – 20/25 US COMMANDOS KILLED >>>

2001.10.22
THE US "HOOK" BIN LADEN FROM SATELLITE. THOUGH NOTHING WILL COME OF IT >>>

2001.10.24
OSAMA BIN LADEN RECEIVED ANTHRAX BY MAIL. AND SENT IT OUT ACROSS THE WORLD >>>

2001.10.24
TOTAL WAR FEARED BY ISRAEL >>>

2001.10.19
OPERATION IN AFGHANISTAN:SITUATION REPORT >>>

2001.10.21
RUSSIAN DEFENSE MINISTER: VERY COMPLICATED SITUATION SHAPES UP AROUND AFGHANISTAN >>>

2001.10.20
AMERICAN SPECIAL FORCES FINISHED THE FIRST GROUND OPERATION IN AFGHANISTAN >>>

2001.10.24
OUR READER BRIAN RUDNICK: OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT BUSH >>>

2001.10.22
OLD WOMEN SELL VENEREAL DISEASES >>>

2001.10.22
DAVID IRVING: AN UGLY QUESTION, WHICH NOBODY WANTS TO ASK, LET ALONE ANSWER >>>

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